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REVIEWS.

Histoire de la Participation de la France à l'Établissement des États-Unis d'Amérique. Correspondance Diplomatique et Documents. Par HENRI DONIOL. Tome Quatrième. Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, Alphonse Picard, Éditeur, 1890. — Large 4to, 721 pp.

For the great work, of which this is the fourth instalment, American scholars are indebted both to the industry of M. Doniol and to the liberality of the French government. It is at once a diplomatic history and a collection of documents, the one part illustrating and confirming the other. Its interest to the student of French history is quite as great as to the student of American affairs. No existing work throws so much light upon French diplomacy during the first decade of the reign of Louis XVI as does this. The *Archives Nationales* have furnished nearly all the material from which it has been written. That material has been used throughout in the most conscientious and scientific manner. The result is a thoroughly original work, a standard authority for all time to come.

In the earlier volumes the purpose of the author has been to show from the French diplomatic correspondence how the plan of aiding the American colonies in their revolt against England was conceived, and to trace every step in the development of it. It was the result of a deliberate and sustained effort on the part of France to recover the position which she had lost during the Seven Years' War. Count Vergennes, the foreign minister of Louis XVI, formulated the plan and led in its execution. His guiding influence appears at every point from the beginning to the end. Here for the first time we have a truthful picture of this statesman, drawn in the main by his own hand. Like the Frenchmen of his generation, he believed that England was the chief disturber of European peace. To him she seemed overbearing, bent on conquest, a restless, faithless power. Chatham was the incarnation of her worst qualities. France by resisting her encroachments would promote the interests of every European nation. In order to achieve success in this enterprise Vergennes followed with perfect consistency and honesty a threefold course of action.

(1) He availed himself as far as possible of the help of Spain. Upon this he had a claim by virtue not only of the interests of that country, but also under the terms of the Family Compact. Previous to

the overthrow of Pombal the aggressions of Portugal in South America forced Spain to act in harmony with France and in opposition to England. After they ceased and Florida Blanca became chief minister at Madrid, it was a task of the greatest difficulty to keep Spain true to the French alliance. The interests of the two countries were not the same. Spain was weak and hesitating. She desired to mediate between France and England. It was not till April, 1779, that she could be induced to sign a convention promising military and naval assistance to France. The aid which she then gave was so slight that it had no determining effect on the struggle. The record of the wearisome negotiations between the two Bourbon courts appears at length in these volumes.

(2) To the mind of Count Vergennes the American colonies were a part of the European political system. Their revolt was therefore an event of the greatest importance. If England subdued them, her power would be thereby increased and she would be ready for further aggressions. If they became independent, she would, in his opinion, try to make good her loss by conquests among the Spanish colonies and the remaining foreign possessions of France. In either case war between the Bourbon powers and England was from the first regarded as almost inevitable. Therefore France began to prepare for it by strengthening her navy, by drawing closer the bonds of alliance with Spain, by encouraging the Americans in all possible ways. In these volumes we have the reports of her ambassadors at London and of the emissaries she secretly employed both in England and the United States. The correspondence of Beaumarchais, so far as it has not already been published, is given. The story of the reception of Silas Deane and of Franklin at Paris is again told. Much new material is given concerning the early movements of La Fayette. It appears that from the first to the last, before as well as after the conclusion of the treaty of alliance, Vergennes acted toward the United States in perfect good faith. He believed that its independence, either with or without a truce, must be secured; to this he was ready on all occasions to pledge the honor of France. He sought only such advantages from the future political and commercial growth of this country as might legitimately flow from such a consummation. He did nothing that was inconsistent with the main object of his policy. The proof of this appears in his correspondence with the Spanish court, and with Gerard and Luzerne, the plenipotentiaries whom France first sent to America. It may therefore be imagined that the Lees, Samuel Adams and John Adams, the leaders of the "anti-Gallican faction" in this country, appear in these volumes in an unfavorable light. They distrusted France and intrigued against her. They were ready, when occasion offered, to conclude a separate peace with England. This was closely

connected with their opposition to Washington and Franklin, who from the first welcomed French assistance and were ready to co-operate.

(3) The harsh maritime code of England furnished as many causes of complaint as did her operations on land. As soon as war commenced neutral vessels began to suffer from her depredations. Vergennes took advantage of this to isolate her and prevent the extension of the war to the continent. The danger of a conflict over the Bavarian succession had been averted by the mediation of France. Advances were now made to the Dutch Republic, to Denmark, Sweden and Russia, which led to the armed neutrality of the Northern Powers. In view of all this the claim of the author that the efforts of the French minister to restore the prestige of his nation were well directed and successful will not be denied.

The volume which is the immediate subject of this review covers the events from the summer of 1779 to the surrender at Yorktown. It treats more directly of American affairs than does any of its predecessors. The chief sources of information that have been used are the correspondence of La Fayette, Rochambeau, D'Estaing and the two French ministers. The letters of Gerard have been found most valuable. During his period of service Gerard was on intimate terms with many of the prominent members of Congress, presented arguments before committees, and in short led the majority in its repeated struggles with the "anti-Gallican faction." He protested against the extreme demands of New England in reference to the fisheries. He sought to harmonize the desires of the South concerning the navigation of the Mississippi with the claims of Spain. He saw clearly how inexperienced were the members of Congress, how crude their methods of business, to how great an extent jealousies and intrigues prevailed among them. He witnessed the indifference which after 1777 took possession of the people, and the suffering caused by the depreciated currency. The view which he took of the situation was substantially the same as that of Washington. It was that the United States were unable alone to achieve their independence. Hence Gerard as the representative of the French government insisted that the questions at issue should be settled in a way consistent with the public law of Europe. This idea he urged in opposition to the egoism and radicalism of the Adamses and their supporters. Both he and his successor had occasion to defend Washington and Franklin against the charges made by their opponents.

M. Doniol has devoted special attention to the campaign of 1781 in Virginia, to the defence of that state by the small force under the command of La Fayette, and to the siege of Yorktown. He shows that the operations of that year were mainly planned and executed by the French. La Fayette's brilliant manoeuvres attracted much attention.

The French commanders, especially Rochambeau, urged that the expulsion of the English from the South was of more importance than anything which could be accomplished in the neighborhood of New York. Washington could not be brought to accept this view, but he consented that a summons should be sent to De Grasse to sail northward with a squadron and troops from the West Indies. De Grasse started as soon as possible for the Chesapeake. Cornwallis under orders from Clinton had retired to the peninsula of Yorktown and was there watched by La Fayette. The situation was so favorable that Washington yielded to the persuasions of Rochambeau, and the united French and American forces started southward for the Virginia coast. The surrender of Cornwallis soon followed and thereby the position of the English at New York was rendered untenable. Of the forces that co-operated at Yorktown less than 4000 were Americans. The French had 7000 land troops and all the vessels and marines.

The appearance of the fifth and concluding volume of this work will be awaited with interest. It will contain the history of the peace negotiations.

HERBERT L. OSGOOD.

The Life and Times of John Dickinson, 1732-1808. Prepared at the request of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, by CHARLES J. STILLÉ, LL.D. Philadelphia, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1891.—8vo, 437 pp.

The subject of this biography has been aptly styled "the penman of the Revolution." The resolutions of the Stamp Act Congress, the well-known letters of a Pennsylvania farmer, the resolutions of the first Pennsylvania Convention, the first and second petitions of the Continental Congress to the King and their address to the inhabitants of Quebec, the declaration of the causes for taking up arms, and the first draft of the Articles of Confederation are all the product of his mind, and made him one of the leaders in the earlier stages of the struggle. Dr. Stillé and other writers before him have agreed in assigning the waning of this popularity to his opposition to the Declaration of Independence. But John Jay, William Livingston, Edward Rutledge, R. R. Livingston, Benjamin Harrison and Robert Morris were equally agreed as to the inexpediency of that declaration, and they seem to have in nowise suffered for their opposition. As a matter of fact, Dickinson's attitude did not deprive him of the confidence of the Continental Congress; for that body, at the very time when his opposition to independence was most pronounced, appointed him to draft the plan of government. It was only in his own colony that he suffered loss of prestige, and this was